

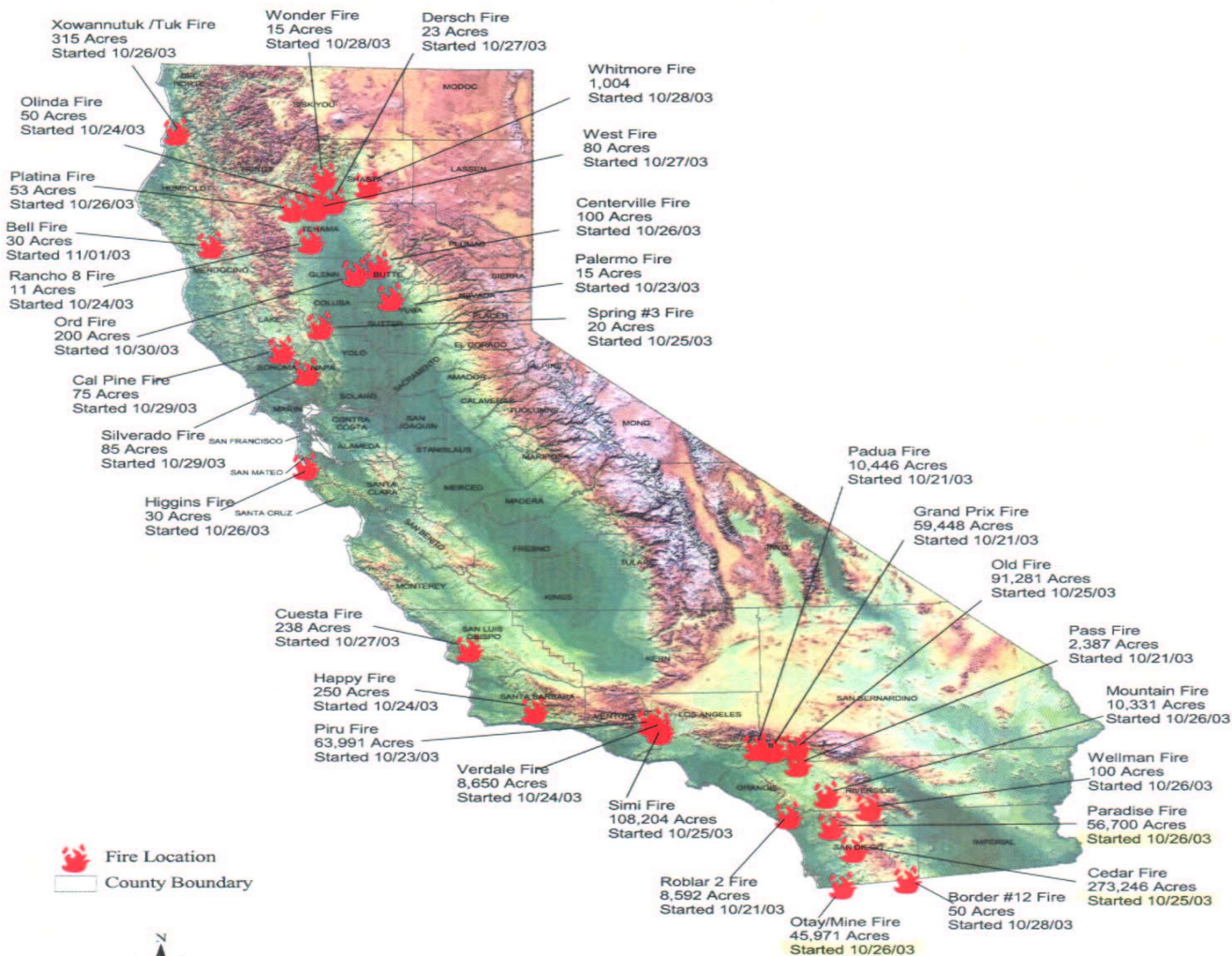
# 30-Day Post-Fire Overview

December 8, 2003



# California Fire Siege 2003

October 21 to November 07



# Introduction

- San Diego County began suffering from the largest wildfires in state history on Saturday, October 25, 2003
- The Cedar fire burned 280,278 acres countywide
- In the City of San Diego, the Cedar fire:
  - Burned 28,676 acres
  - Destroyed 335 structures
  - Damaged 71 structures

# Fire-Rescue Department

- *What we did right...*
  - Protected 672 housing units in Tierrasanta and 950 units in Scripps Ranch
    - Estimated value of \$515 million
  - Ceased filling out-of-county strike team requests to ensure full staffing
  - Called staff in to repair fire engines at the Repair Facility
  - Put reserve and training apparatus into service



# Fire-Rescue

- Recalled off-duty personnel to staff reserve apparatus
- Officially requested the Fire-Rescue helicopter to return to San Diego on October 26
- Organized 11 Damage Assessment Teams to document damaged and destroyed property in a timely manner
- Kept the public informed

# Fire-Rescue

- *What we did wrong and changes needed...*
  - Establish DOC earlier in the incident
  - Did not have a plan or basic supplies to establish, activate and run a Damage Assessment Center, so developed our own team and program
  - Insufficient fire officers for Incident Command requirements
  - Structure triage needs to be improved

# Fire-Rescue

- Lack of personnel to establish safety officers on the fire ground
- Communications Center security plan was not enforced
- No multi-casualty vehicles in the system
- Personnel taken to the fire via bus were not documented when assigned to apparatus
- Better utilization of media news reports to monitor the fire activity

# Fire-Rescue

- *Changes needed in City's fire codes...*
  - Review and enhance construction standards
    - Non-combustible roofs
    - Boxed-under eaves
    - Double-pane windows
  - In urban interface areas, consider:
    - One-hour rated construction for exterior walls
    - Prohibition of combustible construction in close proximity to homes



# Fire-Rescue

- Minimum 100-foot brush thinning from structures
- Provide City staff for Brush Management Program
- Discuss issues county-wide
- Increase focus on fire prevention education
  - Evacuation preparation
  - Improving home fire safety

# Fire-Rescue

- *Force composition changes needed...*
  - Insufficient staff in all divisions
  - Enhance Brush Management Program
  - Insufficient numbers of trained Safety Officers
  - Addition of Firefighter-Paramedics to all truck companies
  - Funding of an aggressive Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program

# Fire-Rescue

- Fire Accreditation process underway, to be complete in February 2005
  - Initial estimates to bring department to 1979 levels of service based on population growth:
    - 21 new support staff positions
    - 11 new engine companies
    - 3 truck companies
    - 2 additional battalions

# Fire-Rescue

- *Additional equipment needed...*
  - Enclosed cabs for all front-line and reserve apparatus
  - A regional Fire-Rescue helicopter program
    - A county-wide study is underway to identify program needs
  - Multi-casualty apparatus
  - Two additional reserve apparatus
  - Equipment to completely outfit all reserve apparatus, including radio equipment



# Fire-Rescue

- Field web gear and fire shelters for all firefighters
- Sufficient quantities of radios, batteries, and chargers
- Protective foam application systems
- An alert system to notify residents throughout the City

# Fire-Rescue

- Appropriate vehicles for fire ground commanders and battalion chiefs
- Tools for the DOC to perform necessary functions required of medium to large scale incidents
- A strong training program needs to be put into place to produce effective and knowledgeable personnel at all levels

# Fire-Rescue

- *Changes needed to mutual aid system...*
  - Developing a concept for Automatic Aid
    - All cities, fire districts and unincorporated areas should work toward proper staffing levels to ensure adequate support of mutual aid needs during significant emergencies in the county
  - Pursuing agreements with local military resources

# Fire-Rescue Summary

- Largest wildfire in California state history
- 32 fires occurring throughout the state simultaneously
- In excess of 750,000 acres burning
- With the resources, staff did an outstanding job
- No loss of life or significant injury to civilians or personnel in the City of San Diego





Fire rages on the east side of the I-15 at Clairemont Mesa Blvd

# Police Department

- *What we did right...*
  - Evacuated areas of Scripps Ranch, Tierrasanta and San Carlos:
    - 18,162 homes
    - 53,570 approximate population
  - Officers quickly deployed to perform mandatory evacuations and secure the neighborhoods
  - Department coordination to obtain needed support, equipment, food and supplies was excellent

# Police

- Timely activation of the department DOC, establishment of Incident Command Posts in the affected areas and a timely callback of department personnel
- Specialized Police units including Air Support, Horse Mounted Unit, and the Motor Squad were effectively utilized

# Police

- *What we did wrong and changes needed...*
  - Dust masks were not readily available, but were obtained quickly; a cache is now in place
  - Civilian support units not immediately notified during the initial phase of the incident
  - Police paging was delayed because Fire-Rescue Department pages have priority in the system
  - Communication between agencies and disciplines needs to improve



# Police

- *Force composition changes needed...*
  - A personnel management software program to more effectively staff incidents
  
- *Additional equipment needed...*
  - State-of-the-art equipment for the DOC
  - Two Command Post vehicles for commanding an incident for a sustained period of time
  - Upgraded onboard communications equipment for Air Support helicopters

# Police

- *Changes needed in mutual aid system...*
  - No changes recommended
  - Law Enforcement mutual aid system is in place by Government Code through the state via established protocols
  - In the future, should consider whether impending disaster could impact our own jurisdiction as it expands
- *Summary...*

# Report Summary

- High-level, 30-Day Overview of internal actions, in response to October 28 Mayor memo and November 3 Council direction
- Numerous additional follow up reports to be presented in January and February
- Local, as well as regional and statewide, efforts are underway to identify resources and improvements needed

# Report Summary

- *What we did right...*
  - The Emergency Operations Center was activated and staffed at Level II
  - Water Department staff ensured there was enough water and adequate water pressure throughout the emergency
  - Emergency generator service came on-line as designed at the City's communications sites to avert communication failure
  - Emergency evacuation centers were established at Mira Mesa High School, Balboa Park and the stadium in conjunction with the Red Cross



# Report Summary

- Operational staff fought fires, assisted with traffic control, cut firebreaks, wet down areas, and moved equipment to protect City assets
- The San Diego Local Assistance Center was established in Scripps Ranch to provide a one-stop location for citizens to access available disaster assistance programs and services

# Report Summary

- *What we did wrong and changes needed...*
  - EOC notification guidelines need to be modified to ensure timely notification of key City staff by the public safety Communication Centers
  - Accurate information concerning the boundaries of the fire and resource deployment was not readily available to the EOC
  - Earlier notification of the Water Department would have provided for anticipation of system adjustments needed to optimize water delivery to critical service areas

# Report Summary

- Coordination of information disseminated on the web page, cable channel and Citizen Access Phone System needs to be improved
- Procurement and implementation of an information management application for the City and County EOCs and DOCs is underway.
  - GIS workstation in the EOC for mapping functions
  - The ability to capture and view video transmissions from a mobile unit in the field

# Report Summary

- Fire Resistant Roofs:
  - Staff is developing proposed new building code regulations to improve fire resistance of structures:
    - Class A roofing that is effective against severe fire test exposures and provides a high degree of fire protection to roof deck Citywide
    - Ban on all wood shake or wood shingle new or replacement roofs Citywide
    - Continue to require non-combustible Class A roofing materials in high hazard areas



# Report Summary

- Fire Resistant Roofs cont.
  - Other changes considered for structures:
    - Exterior fire-rated walls
    - Protection of exterior openings
    - Boxed eaves
    - Restrictions on the use of exposed wood siding or exposed wood structures
  - Proposed regulations in December; to Board of Building Appeals and City Council in January

# Report Summary

- Brush Management:
  - Existing regulations in effect for brush management zones around new and existing structures
  - Zones revised in January 2000
    - No permit required if brush management performed in accordance with the Municipal Code.
  - A review of Brush Management Program policy and regulations, jointly with other agencies, will be conducted
  - Regulations should be modified to remove inconsistencies, clarify, and educate the public

# Report Summary

- Brush Management cont.
  - Park and Recreation has inadequate staff for brush management along City-owned open space
  - City departments are working together to ensure a consistent message is conveyed to the public
    - Currently finalizing a brochure
  - A Brush Management report will be presented in January

# Cost Update

- Initial costs of Cedar fire estimated to be \$16.0 million
  - Initial costs for Fire-Rescue, Police and other approximately \$3.0 million
    - Personnel
    - Activation and support of EOC
    - Fuel for emergency vehicles
    - Paramedic services during the fires
  - Replacement cost estimates for structural damage to Reservoir Keeper residences and equipment loss at El Capitan Reservoir and San Vincente Dam \$800,000



# Cost Update

- Short and long-term recovery effort costs estimated to be \$12.2 million
  - Short-term:
    - Removal of ash, debris, dead trees, and brush
    - Scripps Ranch Local Assistance Center
    - Replacement of traffic signs and damaged equipment
  - Long-Term:
    - Mitigation of possible flooding and erosion control
    - Brush management throughout City's open space areas

# Cost Update

- Impact of fires on City revenues estimated to be \$3.0 million due to:
  - Waived permitting fees for fire victims
  - Cancellation of Chargers Monday Night Football game
    - Pursuing compensation via business interruption insurance
  - Cancellation of tee times at Torrey Pines and Balboa Park golf courses
  - Cancellation of activities at Park and Recreation facilities
  - Preliminary estimates of loss of property tax may amount to approximately \$300,000

# Cost Update

- City will continue to meet with representatives from the State's Office of Emergency Services and FEMA in the coming weeks to review costs and determine what is eligible for reimbursement
- City will be exploring options for alternative funding, such as grants

# Follow Up

- PS&NS discussing Fire-Rescue needs at December 10 meeting
- County-wide study of aerial firefighting needs – Phase 1, December 2003
- Assessment to comprehensively identify public safety resources needed Citywide – early 2004
- Comprehensive review of all department needs conducted and presented during upcoming budget process



# Follow Up

- Building and fire code change recommendations – January 2004
- Brush Management report – January 2004
- Financial impact of fires – February 2004
- Emergency Operations Center report – February 2004
- Long-Term: Fire Accreditation process – February 2005

# Follow Up

- Regional: Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force
- Statewide: Blue Ribbon Commission

# Summary

- Given the resources, size and unique nature of the Cedar fire, City staff in all areas did an outstanding job in protecting and serving the public.
- The public's cooperation and willingness to work with City staff during and after the fire is greatly appreciated
- The Mayor and City Council were very supportive and provided leadership in a very difficult time
- The teamwork exhibited by the entire community saved lives and property
- Moving forward with implementation of improvements needed to do an even better job in the future